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## WORLD TELEPHONE COUNSELING SERVICE MEETS IN TOKYO

by Lee Seaman

They came from Asia, Australia, and North America, speaking Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and English, from home cities as varied as any in the world. Any they left impressed. "We expected to find differences," said Harold Henderson, General Director of Life Line International, "we did. But we didn't expect to find so many similarities."

Similarity was a recurring theme throughout the annual meeting of Life Line International Secretariat, June 26-27, and the following Asian-Australian Conference on Telephone Counseling June 28-30 in Tokyo. Official representatives as well as observers voiced surprise. "The Japanese couldn't believe we dealt with the same problems that they had," says Bill Lamb, Executive Director of Telecare in Canada. "And I felt like I was listening to counselors in Toronto. So many callers have the same needs and problems."

Tokyo is not just a Japanese-speaking Sydney, participants were quick to emphasize; each delegation presented unique problems specific to its own country's traditions and present-day realities. Inochi no Denwa (Life Phone) in Japan receives calls reflecting problems which stem from women's position in Japanese society, while in Taiwan many callers strongly feel the disintegration of traditional family structures, to name only two differences.

Loneliness, however, emerged as a universal problem in participating cities. Without meaningful human contact, urban dwellers feel worthless, isolated and lost, Henderson said. "Life doesn't make sense. [The people] move together like grains of sand on the seashore, alone in a crowd." Telephone counseling, he feels, can reach through isolation to touch these "lost people" and help them find meaning in their lives.

Life Line International is a world association of Christian-oriented telephone counseling services. The Secretariat at this meeting approved membership for Life Line organizations in South Africa and New Guinea and for TELL (Tokyo English Life Line) in Japan. They join Life Line in Australia and New Zealand, Telecare in Canada and Contact in the United States, bringing the international total of Life Line contact centers to nearly 100.

At present Life Line counseling is offered almost exclusively in English. The Tokyo meeting and conference marked the first Life Line Secretariat held in non-English-speaking Asia, according to Henderson. In this and other ways the meeting was a landmark.

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Inochi no Denwa and Kansai Inochi no Denwa, who along with TELL sponsored the conference, have not yet applied for Life Line International affiliation. Inochi no Denwa, although founded by Christians, does not make explicitly Christian statements in either its Constitution or its training program. It sees itself primarily as a social service meeting people's needs, and is recognized as such by the Japanese government. Today about one-third of the 250 volunteer counselors are non-Christian.

Lifeline International requires a positive affirmation of Christianity as the rationale for counselings by member organizations. The director and a majority of board members must be "committed to the Christian faith," and counselor training must include "the insight of Jesus in ministering to human need." Although many of those connected with Inochi no Denwa in Japan wholeheartedly agree with the need for well-grounded counseling at the physical, psychological, and spiritual levels --- including the basic questions of death and the meaning of life --- they feel that goals should be stated carefully and with respect for views of the organization's many non-Christian counselors and counselees.

Life Line was born in Australia in 1963 and spread to Canada in 1965. South Africa and the United States started their teleministries at about the same time. Resources vary from a telephone in someone's spare room to million-dollar buildings complete with fleets of radio-equipped cars which go out to answer calls of special need. Calls can range from a suicidal cry of despair to a child looking for his lost hamster, and counselors never know what will be coming across the lines next. Some centers with sufficient resources provide face-to-face counseling for those who need it. Some provide telephone service via teletype for the deaf, and some "call out," placing their own regular calls to shut-ins and the bedridden who are alone.

Inochi no Denwa began in Japan in 1971. "Japanese used to have family ties that were of great help in resolving personal difficulties," says Sachiko Shirai, Inochi no Denwa staffer. "But society has changed. People are becoming more or less individualistic. They have to solve their problems by themselves, without depending on their families." "Inochi no Denwa was founded to meet people's needs amidst this change in the social structure."

Inochi no Denwa, in common with most Life Line International affiliates provides around-the-clock telephone counseling and offers referral services when necessary. The program has wide and enthusiastic support in both the Tokyo and Kansai areas.

TELL began operation in 1973. As an English-language service in a non-English-speaking country it meets unique needs. Calls come primarily from the foreign community and frequently deal with cultural isolation and the special sense of aloneness experienced by a foreigner in an alien land. Because of its special ministry to a rather small community with limited human resources, TELL is unable to offer 24-hour service; lines are open 9am-1pm and 7-11pm.

Counselors for Inochi no Denwa, as for all Life Line International affiliates are volunteers, although professionals are available for referrals. Applicants participate in 15 to 20 training sessions before their final screening and acceptance as counselors; these sessions focus on counseling skills, problems frequently encountered, and referrals. Training involves role play and supervised counseling sessions. Telephone counselors pledge to refrain from imposing their beliefs on callers and to preserve callers' anonymity. Telephone consultations are given without

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charge, and anonymous calls are accepted.

Henderson stresses the value of staffing with non-professional counselors. "Sometimes the caller just needs a friend to talk to," he says. "Life Line may be that friend, even if anonymous." Ms. Shirai adds, "Some of our calls are from long-time regular customers --- people who carry great burdens ... but have no one to discuss them with ..."

Henderson sees Life Line and similar services as "an increasingly important part of any community's resources for meeting human need." This need is intensifying, he feels, beyond the capacities of existing professional resources; trained volunteers can supplement and complement available professional services to meet people in their loneliness or to help them through a personal crisis.

Life Line International hopes to extend its resources next to interested churches and communities in Latin America and Africa. Inquiries have already been made by organizations in Mexico and Kenya.

WHO CARES???????????????? WE CARE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

read the program for the June conference. Participants see this concern extending around the world.

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#### HITACHI: DISCRIMINATION CASE ENTERS CRUCIAL STAGE

For thousands of Koreans in Japan--and for support groups in Japan and south Korea--the case of Chong Suk Park vs. the Hitachi Corp. has entered a new and crucial stage.

On June 19 Judge Taro Ishido of the Yokohama District Court declared that Hitachi had discriminated against the 23-year-old by refusing him employment because of his Korean nationality. It ordered Hitachi to pay \$6050 in back wages plus a solatium of \$1750.

Although the decision was a human rights landmark in Japanese jurisprudence, the central concern of Koreans now is that all Japanese corporations, beginning with Hitachi, speedily, sincerely and concretely implement non-discriminatory practices in all areas of employment including hiring and promotions.

On May 17 a Hitachi executive signed a statement saying that Hitachi "promises to take responsible and concrete measures lest the company should repeat discriminatory practices in the future." On May 27 the company promised to present these "concrete measures" at a June 17 meeting.

However, Hitachi then unilaterally cancelled the June 17 meeting and proceeded to lock-out the some 140 persons who went to Hitachi's Tokyo head office as scheduled. When the Park supporters then repeated the demand for "concrete measures" and suggested forming an advisory body (of Hitachi, government and Park group supporters), Hitachi responded only that it would "be responsible" and again refused to be concrete about that responsibility.

The situation, therefore, is that although Hitachi has apologized and paid certain sums to Park, the conditions which caused the 3-year legal struggle in the first place remain the same. As a result, the protest movement, including a stepped-up international campaign to boycott Hitachi products, continues. Meanwhile, at a June 29 meeting of Church Women United in South Korea, the women vowed to continue their Hitachi boycott until the company fully implements non-discriminatory policies and practices.

"In the name of the NCC Central Committee, we publicly apologize for the disturbance and misunderstanding created by the recent involvement of NCC leaders in the affairs of 'Association to Protect Japan,' " said the NCC Central Committee following lengthy discussion at its June 7 meeting.

On May 5 several Japanese newspapers reported that representatives of "Nippon o Mamoru Kai" (Association to Protect Japan, or APJ) met Prime Minister Tanaka and requested five things including the promotion of patriotism, legalization of the national flag and anthem, and abolishment of "prejudiced education." For the Japanese public these requests smacked of a rightist movement.

Among the representatives was Dr. Takaaki Aikawa, NCC Chairman. The NCC discussion and above statement were in response to a surge of criticism from NCC member churches, especially from people fighting legislation to nationalize Yasukuni Shrine.

Aikawa explained as follows: The APJ was established on April 2 in a meeting to which Aikawa was invited. He was informed that the APJ was a group of concerned religious leaders gathered to think seriously about the future of Japan. Because of an ecumenical commitment, he innocently accepted an invitation to become an executive member of the group. He had not been informed of the content of demands that were to be passed on to the Prime Minister until the very day he came to the PM's office. He attended the meeting, he says, in order to prevent those religious leaders from promoting the Yasukuni bill. This intention was partially successful, as nothing was mentioned directly about the bill.

To a more informed group of Christians who have been deeply involved in the fight against the Yasukuni bill, the members of APJ clearly back this legislation. Presence of the NCC Chairman in such a group meant a great deal for their cause; the APJ could use him to say that even Christians were on their side. It was a cunning move for the rightist group.

After several meetings of NCC officers, the issue was presented to the Central Committee. Majority opinion held that there had been a grave mistake but that it could not be resolved by the resignation of Aikawa and of John Nakajima, General Secretary (both announced their willingness to follow committee instructions as to their resignation or remaining in office.) Resignation, said the committee, would give the public the impression that the churches were split. Rather, both leaders should increase their fight against the Yasukuni bill and learn from this bitter experience.

The minority opinion was more sharply critical. For them the problem was more than an internal church matter. The posture of the whole church was at stake, especially among non-Christians, they said. Unless the NCC took a clear position on this incident, they felt they could not go on fighting against the Yasukuni bill. This required Aikawa's resignation, they implied. However, this opinion was rejected in the final vote.

"It is foreseeable that there will be more and more approaches to the NCC from various groups," the statement says. "It is urgent that the NCC establish clear principles and a basis for cooperation with other groups."

Other items discussed by the Central Committee included: approval of new bylaws for the newly created Division of Mission and Service; creation of an Indonesian Relations Committee to respond to the recent suggestion of the Indonesian Council to hold a Japan-Indonesian Consultation on Japanese economic penetration in Indonesia; and plans for implementing proposals from the May Consultation on Minority Issues and Mission Strategy held in Kyoto.

Twelve Christian leaders, including the Rev. Laverne D. Mercado, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches of the Philippines (NCCP), and the Rev. Harry Daniel, Associate General Secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), were arrested in Manila by the Philippine Constabulary during the last week of June.

Others arrested include: Dr. Dante Simbulan, former Dean of the Philippine College of Commerce; the Rev. and Mrs. Paul Wilson, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) missionaries assigned to the NCCP for rural evangelism work; Bong Malonzo, a Christian lawyer and former leader of the Philippine Student Christian Movement; the Rev. Roman Tipples, Jr., Inter-church Aid Secretary of the NCCP; Mr. and Mrs. Ric Santiago, staff members of the NCCP; and the brother and two sisters of Carmencita Karagdag, newly appointed Youth Secretary of the CCA.

During the round-up, which took place between June 26 and June 29, five others were taken into detention: Ms. Nellie Mercado, wife of the NCCP General Secretary; the Wilson's 10-year-old son; the Wilson's Filipino househelper; the Santiago's 7-month-old child; and the NCCP janitor.

Ms. Mercado, the Wilson's househelper, and the NCCP janitor were released after 24 hours. Rev. Mercado, according to a report reaching Tokyo, was released from prison on July 4 or 5 in response to demands from the NCCP Executive Committee and international pressure.

Although no formal charges have been brought against any of the arrested, Rev. Mercado was found "not guilty" according to a July 5 cablegram from Colonel Claver, Executive Undersecretary to President Ferdinand Marcos, to the NCCCUSA. The cablegram added that "the others will be held for investigation but will receive most humane treatment." According to observers in Tokyo, the wave of arrests may be related to ideas discussed at an NCCP-sponsored National Consultation on Development held in May. One of these ideas was the rights of Filipino farmworkers--rights which just don't fit into government plans for the "New Society" supposed to emanate from current martial law repression. // Daniel released on July 10.//

*Nihon Sei-ko-kai Looks Outward*

*by Reverend Bart K. Takeuchi*

The Partners in Mission Consultation held in Oiso June 4-6 marked an important step in the history of Nihon Sei-Ko-Kai (NSKK, the Episcopal Church in Japan) in its relationship with overseas Anglican churches. Japan appealed to its partners overseas for help in reorienting the NSKK from the old, traditional pattern of "receiving church" towards a position of outgoing work for others. The Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence concept upheld at the Anglican conference in Toronto in 1963 has taken root and grown slowly but steadily during the past ten year. The NSKK, however, has encountered difficulties in making interdependence real in the life of the church. Many churches are willing to work for others, but a lack of information has hindered actualization of their good intentions. The Partners in Mission Consultation, conceived at the Anglican Consultation in Dublin in 1973, aims to realize participation of churches in a partnership project undertaken with an Anglican Province. The Oiso Consultation was the second such meeting.

The Episcopal Churches of England, the United States, Canada and Australia as well as the Missions to Seamen responded to Japan's invitation by sending representatives who made valuable contributions to the three-day session.

Japan expressed its hope to work for and participate in the life and mission of the churches of Southeast Asia while recognizing Sei-Ko-Kai's

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limitations in manpower and money. Sei-Ko-Kai representatives saw this move from "receiving church" to "contributing church" as basic for the mission of NSKK to church members in Japan. Japanese delegates expressed disappointment, however that this basic idea was not communicated completely to Japan's partners, who seemed to expect NSKK to present its mission planning in terms strictly oriented to Japan and the Japanese. Participants felt some difficulties in communication at the sessions, but they also expressed satisfaction at this first conference between Japan and its partners. Another consultation has been scheduled for April of next year.

#### KYODAN ORGANIZED TO PREPARE FOR 18TH ASSEMBLY

Proceeding with extreme caution aimed at keeping all channels of communication open, the officers of The United Church of Christ have now appointed twelve persons to serve with them as the Preparation Committee for the 18th General Assembly, scheduled to be held in October. The committee agreed that the 18th General Assembly should continue the mood of dialogue and provide a place where minority opinions can be expressed.

#### HEADLINE-MAKING EVENTS --- ELECTION RETURNS

Voters flocked to the polls in record-breaking numbers Sunday, July 7, in what is generally seen here as a major setback for the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and a personal shock to party leader Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka.

As we go to press the LDP has apparently retained a bare majority in the House of Councillors, the Upper House of the Japanese Diet. The LDP secured 123 seats in the 252-seat Upper House, and observers here expect at least three independents to vote with the LDP, giving the party its slim majority. The LDP held 134 seats before the election.

Nationwide voter turnout of 73.22%, the highest recorded since World War II for an Upper House election, is generally seen here as evidence of voters' increasing concern over spiraling prices, questionable election tactics, and costly campaigns.

All-out efforts by Tanaka and the LDP, determined to reverse the steady erosion of their absolute majority in the Diet, may have had the opposite effect on voters, newspapers suggest. Wide publicity has been given recently to the high cost of election campaigns, said run to millions of dollars for a single candidate. The LDP, with its strong support in Japanese business and financial circles, can generally out-spend and out-publicize candidates of other parties.

Meanwhile, many of the "corporation candidates", sponsored jointly by the LDP and by such prestigious conglomerates as Hitachi, Toyota and Sumitomo, emerged victorious. One notable exception was Ken Saka, a political unknown sponsored by Mitsubishi to the tune of over \$2 million in company funds. Late reports showed Saka an almost certain loser.

Big gainers were the Japan Communist Party, from 11 seats to 18, and the Japan Socialist Party, gaining three seats for a total of 62. Komeito (Clean Government) gained one seat for a new total of 24, while the Democratic Socialists dropped to 10 seats, a loss of one.